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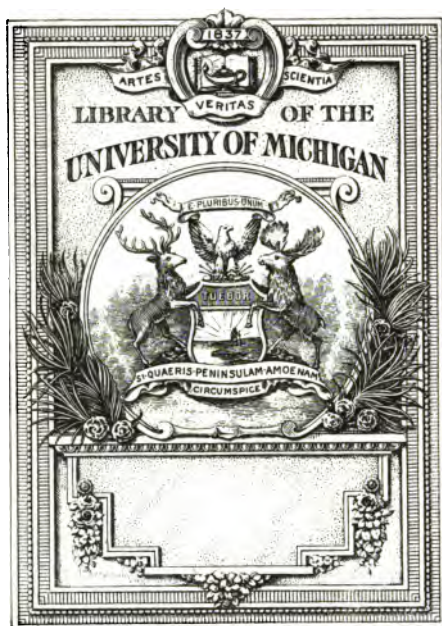
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*The law and method
in spirit-culture.*

University of Michigan



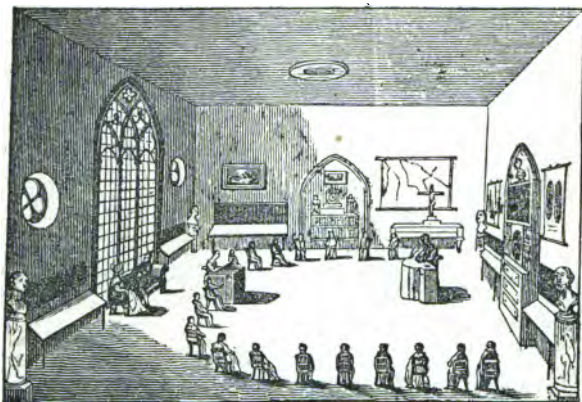
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THE
LAW AND METHOD
IN
SPIRIT-CULTURE;

AN INTERPRETATION OF

A. BRONSON ALCOTT'S
IDEA AND PRACTICE AT THE MASONIC TEMPLE, BOSTON.

BY CHARLES LANE.



BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.

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"Man's noblest offering to Man and to Divinity is an Inspired Child."

REPRINTED FROM THE DIAL NUMBER XII, APRIL, 1843.

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SPIRIT-CULTURE.*

WHEN criticism best attains its end, it is an adjunct to authorship of no trifling pertinency. The true author, — the really original writer, — the first discoverer, — essentially stands above his age. His value to the world consists in his superiority to it. By as much as he more nobly speaks out of the new, is he the instrument for the reanimation and advancement of the old. To the same extent also is he liable to be misunderstood, misrepresented, slighted, or rejected.

At this juncture the interpreter's function legitimately commences. It is the true critic's endeavor to bridge the waters which separate the prophet from the people, to compass the distance which divides the *understanding* in the auditor from the *intuition* in the utterer. The inspired oracle never indulges in a vain expression.

All the sayings of Genius are oracular; all the actions of Originality are inspired. The destiny of the genuinely inspired soul is always to be doubted, or despised, or persecuted in its own day and nation. Not born for years or localities only, but for all times and places, it must await as wide a welcome. We see that this skepticism, or unfriendliness, is necessarily manifested by the very law of

* Conversations with Children on the Gospels; conducted and edited by A. Bronson Alcott. 2 vols. Boston: James Munroe & Co. 1836-7. Record of a School; Exemplifying the General Principles of Spiritual Culture. pp. 208. Boston: James Munroe & Co. 1835. Second Edition, 1836.

Spiritual Culture; or Thoughts for the Consideration of Parents and Teachers. Boston: J. Dowe. 1841.

originality itself ; and just in a degree coequal to the extent or depth of the originality. The greatest, the divinest genius is persecuted to death, even unto ignominious death ; a moderate degree of inspiration is merely hunted through the world ; a lighter share of originality is allowed to waste itself in neglected poverty and soul-chilling solitude. For it is not, we surmise, *always* true that the measure of the world's acceptance of genius is the index to the profundity of that generic love. Had it been so, the world ere now would have been in a more loveful position than self-confessedly it is. Loveful utterances in the deepest tone, loveful actions in the gentlest manner, have been spoken and enacted in the world's theatre, and the records of them still remain, kindly appealing to humanity for a response. Yet it comes not. Or, at the utmost, as in the mimic theatre, the spectators vehemently applaud each virtuous representation as it passes before their eyes, but as instantly forget it. Influences pass over humanity as the wind over the young trees ; but the evanescent air is not the abiding sap. Manifestations of genius have not generally induced men to seek a closer union with the genetic power. We lack even imitative amendment.

Scarcely, therefore, can it be granted that the want of success, which so frequently characterizes the career of genius, is attributable either to any deficiency of love or want of exponential ability on its side. Something, nay much, depends on the construction of the receptive vessel. The finest wine must be inevitably spilt, if poured upon a solid marble sphere ; not even nectar itself could be retained in a sieve ; and let us recollect that genius is ever too ready to pour forth its offerings, to consider critically the state or nature of the receiving mind. The mind supposed to be recipient will be found not seldom to be repellent, and even when frankly disposed to receive, often finds the task too difficult at once to comprehend that which emanates from the progressed being. The sun steadily shines on, though by its beams the swamp exhales miasma as the peach deliciously ripens.

Undoubtedly the self-complacent auditor may construct a fensive axiom, or what is familiarly designated a truism, and pronounce that *if* genius had love *enough*, it never could appeal to us in vain ; with love enough, the most

strong-hearted must be moved. This is of course a tenable position. With two such excellent diplomatic "peace-making" words in one sentence as "if" and "enough," no doubt can be raised against the veracity of the aphorism. But in our estimation that code of morals does not rank very high, which would establish a divine origin by proof drawn from the results of the action. It is needful to act, to act morally, genetically, generatively, before results can be, and *all* the results can never be known to the individual. Confirmation may possibly, in some points, be gathered from observance of consequences, but it is rare that anything beyond matter for useful and modificative reflection can be gleaned from that field.

No ; it is sadly, sorrowfully true, that there are rocks so adamant, brutes so untameable, that not even Orpheus himself, in his most celestial mood, can subdue them by the softest notes from his enchanting lyre. Our reproaches, therefore, shall not fall upon the love-inspired teacher because the taught are not more highly adtempered than we find them. Indeed, we will reproach none, not even ourselves ; for the interpreter, albeit his position is more temporary and local, has his proper time and place.

There is a converse notion, however, rather too commonly adopted by active minds, wishful enough of good in their respective ways, but not yet sufficiently stable to be replenished with the needful talent ; and our duty leads us to declare its idiotism. The bustling interloper, the mechanical rhymester, or the verbal handicraftsman, finding no reception in the world corresponding to his self-approbative desires, is wont to assume the position of neglected or persecuted genius, because men of genius have, as we also affirm, time out of mind, been public victims. A playwright is not a Shakspeare, merely because in common with the gifted bard he knows "a little Latin, and less Greek." A religious zealot, even respectable as he may be in morals, and we say it with genuine, heartfelt respect for all zeal, has not always the inspired right to assume the crown of martyrdom, merely because he is opposed in the world. Not all are Christ's who fall under man's disapprobation. Oddity is not a sure certificate of worth, though the worthy must of course be singular where ills abound. The unauthorized authors, the uninspired teachers, are in

fact themselves the persecutors; and to their ears let the truth be whispered, that while the false prophet endeavors to raise a public clamor concerning his supposed oppressions, true genius silently suffers.

When with honesty, integrity, and clearness, the critical interpreter's work is performed, the public are not a little assisted to a just appreciation of generic ideas of a really novel character, that is to say, coming out of the new spirit. In every department of literature and art, there is much debris to be turned over to discover the solitary jewel; much dusty winnowing is needful for the separation of the true germinative grains. No extent of labor is however too great, if the above named conditions are complied with.

These observations appear to be called for, as introductory and explanatory of our present purpose. In some degree appropriate to any mental production, they are peculiarly applicable to the case before us. The fate of nations, as of individuals, is ever to look abroad for that which they might find at home. Articles of food, dress, ornament; new cloth, new patterns, new ideas, are to be imported by ship, instead of being wrought from our native soil or soul. That, which is brought from a distance by great labor, is, for no better reason, highly esteemed, while the spontaneous home product is unused. By the same law, the native prophet is unhonored; the domestic author is neglected.

Goethe, in his father land, after many industrious years of exposition, earns a moderate respect, while in England his mystic profundity is appreciated, and in America he is placed on the pinnacle of renown.

Carlyle, in his native England coldly and slowly admitted to the ranks of genius, in America is kindly regarded as one of the brightest stars in the literary horizon.

And, not to mention others, Alcott, almost utterly neglected by contemporaries, must seek his truer appreciation beyond the great waters; and in the quietest nook in Old England behold the first substantial admission of his claim to be considered the exponent of a divinely inspired idea. New England, failing in honor to her children, and having no newer and more youthful country to accept and reflect their merits, may receive the award of the old land.

The first really spontaneous, vital, and actual welcome,

which Bronson Alcott's mission has enjoyed in its full meaning and intent, appears to have been in the bosoms of those friends, who established the School called after his name at Ham in the county of Surrey, a few miles only from the huge metropolis of England. At Ham, "umbra-geous Ham," as the poets truly designate it, which lies between the heights of classic Richmond with its extensive stately park, and the gentle silvery Thames, these sincere projectors carried out a living example of Alcott's idea of human culture, in some practical particulars exceeding the experience of the original, but in intrinsic merit confessedly falling short of those permanent moral and intellectual results, which singularize this recorded effort at the Boston Masonic Temple. This choice of a beautiful locality we mention, because it may be received as an emblem of the fidelity and unmercenary purpose of these earnest promoters of human welfare. But the heart to appreciate, the head to perceive the means, and the hands to execute a new and noble sentiment are not commonly united in one individual. There is, moreover, that useful quality of perseverance not always present, that day by day, hour by hour steadiness and care, meeting each event as it occurs, without which no abiding work of art can be produced. Heartfelt admiration is too ready to conclude that the highly finished statue, whose beauty is perceived at a glance, was as momentarily produced. So smoothly do the thoughts and versification of the poet glide on through his argument, that the enchanted reader questions not that it was as briefly written as it is read. It is so easy, who could not do it? This is the perfection of executive art. The pencils, the colors, the easel are removed. The blurred manuscripts, over which the author toiled so many days and nights, in polishing the Carrara marble of his verse into smooth turns and agreeable attitudes, are withdrawn from sight, and the pleasing result unclouded remains. This is the difference between genius and the generator; between God and man. The *idea* is unquestionably impregnated by the divine mind on the human soul at a *flash*; at an instant of time whose duration is too short to be capable of measurement; and it may therefore be more truly said to be conceived in eternity than in time. But the outworking of the idea is a temporal work;

and assiduity is constantly an attribute in true genius. The seed, buried in the dark earth, germinates, under the favorable conditions of spring, at some inappreciable point in time. Of the radiant sun at noon, while we say it is, it is not. Thus of every deific manifestation. But to man is awarded another course. Through the law of industry he is to elaborate those divinely generated conceptions, to whose inbirth time is not attributable.

The God-born idea is not an impulsion, but an inspiration; not a personal pleasure, but a universal happiness. It is not a fluctuative influence, as is frequently fancied, which comes sometimes and then departs. It is not a momentary stimulus, which urges us this morning to write a book, to build a church, or to visit the sick; and this afternoon leaves us tired or disgusted with the effort. Quite the contrary. It is a permanent, abiding, substantial pressure, which allows not the youthful artist to dissipate the holy mornings of spring in dreams of deeds he never will realize, but continually energizes his soul to action. Impulse is more dangerous than steady inanition. Dull unpretension never will mislead; but the impulsive and influential, the sometimes good, the wavering, are on all occasions, both to themselves and their susceptible neighbors, sources of disappointment and unhappiness.

Cordial therefore as was the joy with which the idea of a deep and true spirit-culture was hailed on this occasion, the satisfactory results were not throughout obtained, in default of efficient human instruments.* Those who re-

* The following letter from the late Mr. Greaves to Mr. Alcott confirms our remarks, and well deserves insertion in this place.

49 Burton Street, Burton Crescent, }
London, 16th September, 1837. }

DEAR SIR,

Believing the Spirit has so far established its nature in you, as to make you willingly to co-operate with itself in Love-operations, I am induced, without apology, to address you as a friend and companion in the hidden path of Love's most powerful revelations. "The Record of a School" having fallen into my hands, through Miss Harriet Martineau, I have perused it with deep interest; and the object of my present address to you, (occasioned by this work,) is to obtain a more intimate acquaintance with one, in our Sister Land, who is so divinely and uni-

ceived most truly were personally too aged and too unexecutive ; and the appointed executive, though occasionally enraptured with the thought, was too desultory and impulsive to realize so grand a scheme. But even with this

versally developed. Permit me, therefore, dear Sir, in simple affection, to put a few questions to you, which, if answered, will give me possession of that information respecting you and your work, which I think will be useful to the present and to future generations of men. Also a mutual service may be rendered to ourselves, by assisting to evolve our own being more completely ; thereby making us more efficient instruments for Love's use, in carrying forward the work which it has begun within us. The Unity himself must have his divine purposes to accomplish in and by us, or he would not have prepared us as far as he has. I am, therefore, willing to withhold nothing, but to receive and transmit all he is pleased to make me *be*, and thus, at length, to become an harmonious being. This he can readily work, in the accomplishment of his primitive purposes. Should you think that a personal intercourse of a few weeks would facilitate the universal work, I would willingly undertake the voyage to America for that purpose. There is so decided and general a similarity in the sentiments and natures addressed in the account of your teaching, that a contact of spirits so alike developed would, no doubt, prove productive of still further development. Your school appears to work deeper than any we have in England ; and its inner essential character interests me. If an American Bookseller will send over any of your books to his correspondent here, I shall be happy to receive and pay for them.

In the year 1817, some strong interior visitations came over me, which withdrew me from the world, in a considerable degree, and I was enabled to yield myself up to Love's own manner of acting, regardless of all consequences. Soon after this time, I met with an account of the Spirit's work in and by the late venerable Pestalozzi, which so interested me, that I proceeded at once to visit him in Switzerland ; and remained with him, in holy fellowship, four years. After that I was working, with considerable success, amongst the various students in that country, when the prejudices of the self-made wise and powerful men became jealous of my influence, and I was advised to return to England, which I did ; and have been working, in various ways of usefulness ever since, from the deep centre, to the circumference ; and am now engaged in writing my conscientious experiences, as well as I can represent them in words, and in teaching all such as come within my sphere of action.

large drawback there yet remained so striking and prominent an approach to good men's hopes, that, notwithstanding the supposition of introducing impossible novelties, the number of individuals moved by the example is sufficient

Receptive beings, however, have as yet been but limited, and those, who permanently *retain*, have been still less; yet, at present, there appears a greater degree of awakening to the central love-sensibility, than before. I see many more symptoms of the harvest time approaching in this country. There is, at present, an obvious appearance of the Love-seed beginning to germinate.

Such of the following questions, as you may think calculated to throw any light upon what you are doing, I shall be obliged if you will answer, with any other information you may feel disposed to supply, for the universal good.

1. Do your instructions entirely follow the universal ideas; and are they connected with any peculiar sect of religion?
2. Are you, yourself, satisfied with the results that appear?
3. Have you had many difficulties to overcome?
4. How early do you begin to act upon children?
5. Is a day-school or a boarding school best to carry out your views?
6. Have you found any one able to assist you?
7. Can mutual instruction avail anything?
8. Does the moral influence decidedly dominate over the intellectual in the children?
9. Are the Parents willing to let you have the children?
10. What religious sect works most favorably with you?
11. What sect works most against you?
12. Do the children that have come from other schools show any preference to yours?
13. To what age would you keep the children?
14. Do you think that your mode of instruction could be easily nationalized?
15. Is your mode of teaching compared with other modes, or is it estimated with relation to the end sought?
16. Do the children soon begin to perceive the power of the end that you have led them to?
17. Are inner tranquillity and inner thoughtfulness results of the primary purpose?
18. Do you find that the exercise of the inferior faculties neutralizes what you have done?
19. Can you make all branches of instruction relate to the primary purpose?
20. Do the Girls make greater progress under you than the Boys, and are they more grateful for the results?

to encourage any, who are so doubtful as to require the confirmation of associate approbation. Enough of good was done to prove the path to the best. The gates of Eden were temptingly in view, though the ultimate abode was not entered.

-
21. How do you rank music, singing, and dancing, as means?
 22. Has sound a more universal influence than sight?
 23. Are the poor children more easily acted upon than the rich?
 24. Do the children feel at a loss, when they are removed to another school?
 25. Can you act with more effect upon strange children than upon your own?
 26. Is the spirit of inquiry considerably deepened, and does it take an eternal, instead of a temporal direction?
 27. How many scholars would you undertake to instruct in the manner you are acting?
 28. Do you consider the mode in which you have fitted up your school room as very beneficial?
 29. Is it used for ordinary purposes, or only for instruction?

The child has two orders of faculties, which are to be educated, essential and semiessential, or in other words, roots and branches.

Radical faculties belong to the interior world, and the branchial to the exterior.

To *produce* a central effect on the child, the radical faculties must be first developed; to *represent* this effect, the branchial faculties must be developed.

The radical faculties belong entirely to Love, the branchial to knowledge and industry.

It is imperative upon us to follow the determination of the radical faculties, and to modify the branchial always in obedience to the radical.

It is the child, or the Love-Spirit in the child, that we must obey, and not suffer the Parents or any one else to divert us from it.

Good is not to be determined by man's wishes, but Good must originate and determine the wish.

The Preceptor must watch attentively for every new exhibition of the child's radical faculties, and obey them as divine laws.

We must in every movement consider that it is the Infinite perfecting the finite.

All that is unnecessary in the external must be kept from the child.

The Preceptor's duty is, as far as possible, to remove every hinderance out of the child's way.

Not many years have revolved since scholastic modes had sunk to so low and miserable a point, that almost simultaneously a Pestalozzi, a Neff, and an Oberlin, were enabled to shed around them no small lustre, to acquire in

The closer he keeps the child to the Spirit, the less it will want of us, or any one else.

The child has an inward, sacred, and unchangeable nature; which nature is the Temple of Love. This nature only demands what it will give, if properly attended to, viz. Unfettered Liberty.

The Love Germs can alone germinate with Love. Light and Life are but conditions of Love. Divine capacities are made by Love alone.

Love education is primarily a passive one; and, secondarily, an active one. To educate the radical faculties is altogether a new idea with Teachers at present.

The parental end must be made much more prominent than it has been.

The conceptive powers want much more purification than the perceptive, and it is only as we purify the conceptive that we shall get the perceptive clear.

It is the essential conceptive powers that tinge all the consequences of the exterior conceptive powers.

We have double conceptions, and double perceptions; we are throughout double beings; and claim the universal morality, as well as the personal.

We must now educate the universal moral faculties, as before we have only educated the personal moral faculties.

It is in the universal moral faculties that the laws reside; until these laws are developed, we remain lawless beings.

The personal moral faculties cannot stand without the aid of the universal moral faculties, any more than the branches can grow without the roots.

Education, to be decidedly religious, should reach man's universal faculties, those faculties which contain the laws that connect man with his maker.

These reflections seem to me to be worthy of consideration. Should any of them strike you as worth while to make an observation upon, I shall be happy to hear it. Suggestions are always valuable, as they offer to the mind the liberty of free activity. The work we are engaged in is too extensive and important, to lose any opportunity of gaining information.

The earlier I receive your reply, the better.

I am, dear Sir, yours, faithfully.

J. P. GREAVES.

their respective circles a more than transient fame, by their practical attempt to raise our public disciplines one or two degrees out of the wretched depths into which they had fallen. Few perhaps of their ideas were new. Expositions or dreams of them existed in books; indistinctly in the records of the ancient philosophical fathers; prophetically in the hopes of modern moralists. But the peculiar claims of these men consisted in their bringing to practice, in the most humble and familiar manner, modes of treating human nature, which from long obsolescence had grown out of all memory. Youth of all ages, conditions, and pursuits had so long been given over to harsh feelings and the deadly doctrine of acquisitive knowledge, that the combined ideas of a loveful teacher, and the living source of truth in the taught, came upon the world as a wholly original discovery, involving the projector in all the difficulties and opposition with which genius is generally encountered. The world's gratitude has not, however, withheld the just tribute to these faithful innovators. But while personally to such men, and universally to their practical ideas, they now render due homage, the progressive minds of this age will not fail to perceive, that this movement was but preparative to a deeper and more important change. [It was not a trifling task to persuade the pedant to lock up the ferule in his desk, and appeal for power to the love in his own bosom. This was a strange mode, he thought, of quelling a juvenile rebellion. Nor was it to him less heretical to think of folding his printed book for a moment, and essaying the experiment of developing *from* the pupils a clearer exposition of the law of number, or form, or of thought, than he could ever transfuse *into* them by means of the best book ever penned. The experiment, however, was tried, and wherever it was faithfully attempted success was certain.]

And sufficient good has appeared to all unbiassed observers, to shake to its foundation the old and oppressive dogmatic discipline. Even in the most conservatorial recesses coercion and dictation begin to abate somewhat of their fury, making way for the developing principle, which must in turn yield to that inmost treatment now presented. [The method of Instruction when conjoined with the doctrine, that the human mind is comparable to a fair blank sheet of paper, had arrived at its lowest degradation. The notion,

that the human soul is but a capacity, more or less extensive for the reception of impressions to be made upon it by surrounding objects through the external senses, seems to be the darkest, the most deathlike predicament in which humanity could be entrammelled. When Bacon, with manly and original vigor, encountered the school verbiage, into which discipline had fallen from those realities which the Aristotelian forms once represented, it is quite certain he could not have anticipated a mistake on the part of his pretended followers, equal to that into which the school men had erred. They had indeed forgotten the superior half, the *dimidium scientiæ* of their great and brilliant prototype.

The worse result of this error is its very general diffusion. The notion and the language of it pervades all ranks, much to the unmaning of humanity. Even now it is maintained that external objects strike the mind. When driven from this absurdity by the evident truth that the mind must be the actor, the first mover, and act through the senses *upon* the object; it is re-urged that the object acts upon the retina of the eye, making an impression there, and, through it, upon the mind. If this be followed up by showing that the object never can be the subject or actor; that the objective case is not the nominative case; the charge comes forth of verbal and unworthy distinctions with which the practical man will not trouble himself. We may appeal to the current language employed in every-day life, through the mouth and through the pen, for proof to what an extent this depressing idea prevails of man being passive to surrounding objects. It has in fact grown up into a sort of philosophy. The potency, the creative influence of circumstances is constantly pleaded, as the cause and excuse for a state of existence we are too idle or too indifferent to amend. No scholastic jargon, or idols of the mind, as Bacon called them, which his *Novum Organum* dethroned, could have exceeded in direful force the prevalence of this circumstantial philosophy.

Sincerity is the youthful attribute. Deference to things which exist, to persons placed in authority over youth, either by natural laws or social custom, is much more common than is supposed. When they discover at every turn their native vivacity repressed, and their spontaneity checked, by the most solemn assurances and uniform prac-

tice which could possibly be realized for a false theory, it would be wonderful indeed if they skepticized upon the subject. This being also the tenet of our most progressive outward philosophers, it has the charm of apparent advancement which youth demands. It thus has an interior as well as an exterior popularity, through which few minds, it seems, have power enough to break away into higher, clearer regions.

To borrow an illustration from the binder, the business of instruction is similar to that of gilding and lettering the backs of the books; putting ornaments on the edges and outsides of the leaves; while the process of development treats humanity as something more than a mere capacity to receive. It treats each individual as a book containing sentiments of its eternal author; not indeed born with expressions of ideas in forms, such as have been before employed; but a book which, when opened, when permitted to open, in daily intercourse with outward things, leaf by leaf, will unfold itself in modes and expressions ever new and beautiful. By treating the mind as a subservient passive blank, we go far to make it so. Dark prophecies are not unfrequently realized by the malicious efforts of the prognosticator. We must have faith for better success. Not only is the human soul comparable to a book in respect to the fact, that there is a progressive opening for an inner idea, occultly present previous to the development, but also in this, that the human soul is capable of a conscious union with the thread that passes through its inmost being, and binds all its leaves together. There is this *intensive* education, so generally remitted to the later incidents in human life, as well as the *extensive* and discursive education, which school development comprehends. In but one man does it seem to have been the pervading, the life-thought, the ever-present idea. Granting that Pestalozzi had an intuition of this inmost fact, and that much of *his own* proceeding had in view its realization in his pupils; yet from its obscurity in him, or the unpreparedness of the public mind, it was not declared in that lucid manner in which it now is announced. His interrogative mode too was so much more appropriate to the unfolding of a quick intellect than of a gentle heart, that we can scarcely attribute to him the design of directing the soul

to that one needful knowledge without which man is not man, life is not life.

Each of these principles has a mode. Instruction delivers its dogmas, Education interrogates, Spirit-culture is by conversation; conversation not in its narrow sense of idle talk, but in deep communion by tongue, pen, action, companionship, and every modification of living behavior, including that of its apparent opposite, even silence itself. Instruction may be Pythagorean; Education, Socratic; but Spirit-culture is Christ-like. Being the latter, it is also the two former, as far as they are consistent with pure intellectual affirmations, and spontaneous love.

Conversation, communion, connexion of heart with heart, the laying open of unsophisticated mind to unsophisticated mind, under the ever prevailing conviction of the Spirit's omnipresence, are the modes and the principle of Alcott's annunciation to mankind. Throughout and throughout he would have the One Omnipresent recognized in actual operations, even as in the title to the chapters in his published work. Without embarrassing the subject with the question, whether all improvement is bounded by this discovery, and whether so great a consummation remained for so humble an individual, one placed just under our own eyes, whom it is no rarity to see and hear, whom we are in daily familiarity with, we may be allowed to remark, that we think the world justly owes itself an inquiry and an effort to realize this idea to the fullest. On all sides we find the admission, that something further is to come. We have not arrived at the happy point. Our young men, saturated with antique lore in theological seminaries, are scarcely to be enumerated amongst the wholesome specimens of human intelligence or religious love. Our young women, though free from the toils of Latin and Greek, and given over a little to the idea of development, are yet far from the millennial state, which a parent desires, or a husband would cherish. The best practice of the best theories, hitherto promulgated, leaves room enough for the invitation of some further proposition; and such we have now presented to us.

True conversation seems not yet to be understood. The value of it therefore cannot be duly prized. Its holy freedom, equidistant from hot licentiousness on the one hand,

and cold formality on the other, presents constantly to the living generous mind a sphere for inquiry and expression, boundless as the soul itself. This true communion permits all proper modes to be employed, without a rigid or exclusive adherence to any particular one. There may be a time for Quaker silence, for Episcopalian monotony, or for Unitarian rhetoric. Instruction requires its pupils to be passive to the lecture or the strictly defined task. Development calls for answers limited to its initiatory questions; while Conversation goes beyond these two, not by annihilating them, not by disusing or condemning them, but by mingling them, as occasion may demand, in that process which equally permits the pupil to interrogate or to make a statement of his own flowing thought. It opens every channel to the inexhaustible sluices of the mind. It demands no dogged, slavish obedience, it imposes no depressing formula, it weighs not down the being with an iron discipline, that when removed is found to be the spring to riot and debauchery; but leaving to the artless spontaneity of pure infancy the free expression of itself, attains the highest end in education, so far as human means can serve it. This expression of itself, or, in preferable terms, the free, full, and natural expression of the Spirit through humanity, is the high destiny in our earthly existence. More than this cannot be promised or praised of any piece of human organization. The tendency in all our systems to become stereotype moulds, for the fixing of the new generation according to the pattern of the old, is still an argument for the trial of new plans. But every system was doubtless good in its own day, and in its original author's hands. Grant "us youth" the same privilege ungrudgingly, which was conceded or assumed by our ancestors. The virtuous institutions of to-day will become corrupt within ten short years. The reformer himself needs to be reformed in his ideas, as soon as he has obtained his ideal reform. We must not freeze the gushing stream so near its source, but let it sparkle in the summer sun. Let us have the last deep thought fresh from the infant soul, and if it be inconsistent with its previous utterance, so let it be. Is it true, is it honest, is it faithful, are questions which the teacher may ask; not is it consistent with my views or system. Consistency is an attribute of the rusty

weather-vane, and is not to enforce a compliance by youthful joy to hoary sadness.

In every such attempt as this to better humanity, the cry of alarm is raised, that our sons and daughters may indeed become poetic, but they will stand forth in the world useless and neglected. And in addition to this apprehension, the description we have submitted may have excited the idea, that a state of complete lawlessness must ensue, that humanity would again become wild, a cunning wilderness throughout, in which selfishness alone could reign.

Parents perhaps must be permitted without contradiction to pronounce upon the degree of selfishness, which entered into the procreation of their offspring. This spontaneous kind of education certainly gives a greater degree of liberty to the being, such as he is, than any other. But it does so in a godlike faith, in something more than faith, in a religious certainty in the teacher's own bosom, that if he himself be freed, if he be true, honest, and faithful, he shall not in vain appeal to the free-making spirit in the little one. And, whether as parent or friend, none other than the free should venture upon the tender and hallowed ground of Spirit. No one can in fact enter these holy precincts, except so far as he is in real liberty. The rudeness of anger, the vileness of selfishness, the haste of doctrinism, close the young bud of as the human soul, the hand of man causes the tender leaf of the sensitive plant to be curled up. Its native cry is, touch not me. The soul is sealed against such violent assaults, and not always are the natural parents fitted to become the best spiritual ones. On the contrary, the probability is that the quality or organ, too prominent in the parent, shall be that one which is uppermost in the offspring also; so that when they begin to be active to each other nothing but a perpetual clashing must ensue. And this must continue until we have a diviner generation.

Numerous are the beautiful sentiments which we have heard in behalf of the unbroken connexion between mother and child. True in a practical sense they would undoubtedly be, as in idea they are beautiful, were but the mothers as practically true and beautiful. Until then we are bound to admit that a temporary sphere, superior to the parental home, may sometimes be discovered. There

are minds born with an intuition for this art, this highest of the fine arts, and of these, Pestalozzi and Alcott are distinguished masters. In the former there was a strong *desire* to throw the activity upon the child; in the latter there is more *success*. There is sometimes an urgency in the developing system, especially on the part of those who adopt it imitatively, which in the deeper mode is resolved into quiet patience. The thought may be enshrined in the soul, the feeling may to-day be most intense, but we must wait for the season of expression.

To aim at brilliant immediate results, is as fatal as to enforce apparent consistency. Humanity needs above all things a larger faith. It is the heavenly privilege to hope against rational expectation. In childhood we shall find the largest confession of faith. This we should encourage to the freest expression without, and to the fondest cherishing within. We encourage it most, we cherish infant purity in every aspect, in the highest degree, when we neither check it nor hasten it. When Rousseau said, "Education is that art in which we must lose time in order to gain it," he might, had he been faithful himself to the Spirit, have given a deeper turn to his thought, and have announced, that education is a process in which we may use time in order to gain eternity. A higher reality than time, or brilliant show, is to be gained in education, which by Alcott is designated Spirit-culture.

We foresee several objections which will be raised against these principles; or in preferable language we may say, we perceive several classes of objectors as likely to arise. In the estimation of one class there will be too much abstraction; that is to say, too frequent an allusion from facts in the outward world to those in the inner world. In the opinion of another class, there will not be religion enough; that is to say, there will not be allusion enough, direct and unallegorized, to the interior life. Some parents will conclude there is too strong a tendency to definition, while others determine that every subject is treated in a vague manner, and that their children on quitting such a school would in themselves be vain and pedantic, and for themselves as well as their neighbors, ignorant and useless beings. It will be said, that while they may possibly pick

up a few words, they will be singularly destitute of knowledge.

Such contradictory estimates must be allowed in part to neutralize each other. Parents, as well as observers generally, can only judge from their own position, and that unfortunately is not the position of childhood. At least the parent might grant as much liberty of thought and action to one, who devotes sincerely and purely an entire life to the education of children, as he does to the baker, who provides the bread. The teacher must daily endure more dictation than the physician, or even the shoemaker, has inflicted on him during his whole career. But this extreme parental criticism arises from the most sacred feelings. Undoubtedly. So also do the improved modes of the teacher. If they do not, the parent should not confide his offspring to him.

The ends proposed in education are so very various, that it is scarcely possible to address all minds at once. Although, in general terms, the ultimate or final end is the happiness of their children, yet the intermediate or educative ends are almost as various as the parents. Nay, even the two parents in one family are not always agreed upon the subject. If the desire be to see the boy qualified to become a man of business, every moment devoted to art or moral culture will be deemed so much time and thought surreptitiously abstracted from the true end. If the girl be designed for an artist, the pencil must be perpetually in hand. But what has the true teacher to do with these projects? They have little concern with the soul's legitimate wants. Thoughtless or selfish as may have been the child's generation, there is yet a power in it which shall better instruct the teacher what is the peculiar end in its earthly existence, than the ambitious aspiration in the parents. This is a point to be determined between the teacher and child, rather than between the parent and teacher.

The objections of the exoteric mind we would meet by observing, that too much haste is shown in drawing conclusions. The schoolmaster is not so fortunate as the shoemaker, for his work is never finished, and he is sure to be checked, criticised, and stopped in the process. A vast proficiency may appear in a short time by a display of the imitative powers. But the demand in the child's nature is to

have its creative powers developed. A clever trading teacher can send home the boy's book filled with writing, drawing, and arithmetic of an apparently excellent character; while the child shall really know very little of the laws of form or number. On the other hand, the pupil, in whom the powers or laws shall really be better developed, may be yet unable to make so good-looking an outward display. No trifling or ordinary observing powers are competent to forming a judgment on the state of a young person's soul, or on the processes which are going on within it. The examination of a school must be carried deeper than counting the scholars, measuring the length of the desks, or examining the ventilation. The abiding interest manifested by many talented parents in their frequent attendance at Mr. Alcott's school, as recorded in these excellent works, is a cheering proof that this valuable process was not altogether unappreciated, and is also a specimen of what school examination should be. It is a trite remark, that no one really knows what the action "to learn" is, until he begins to teach. At least we might, then, require of parents that they should put themselves into a like position, as nearly as possible, with their children, before they pronounce on the merits of the school. Children and parents should, in fact, be taught together; and it is only in default of willingness on the part of the latter to learn that which can only be learnt in the deepest life-experiences, that renders other aid necessary. Talent is not the deficiency, for the needful talent would arise in the process, but the unselfish will is not yet present. And it does seem hardly suitable that self-will, though enshrined in the parental bosom, should interpose between the soul which is given up to human good and its outworking. For such is the condition of the teacher, or he is an impostor, and is not for one moment to be trusted with babies and their hornbook. If the parent does not choose this position, rather, then, permit the child to determine the value of the process and its end.

Most thinkers have now arrived at the perception, that there is a double process in teaching; namely, a developing action, which serves to bring out in order and harmony all the innate powers, capacities, and organs; and an instructive operation, which lays gradually before the child,

in a manner suited to the several stages in its development, the accumulated records of past events. When the first mentioned of these ideas was in recent times anew proposed to the world, the outcry was, "Oh, you will make the children wiser than their fathers." But these grey-beard sneers prevailed not. Silence ensued, if not conviction. Tolerance, if not liberty, was won for the human race. But dumb toleration probably yet hides remains of the old feeling. When spirit-culture is spoken of in some circles, there are still discoverable symptoms of condemnation, as of a needless novelty, a vain refinement. "Why pester the children continually, and on every subject, with this allusion to Spirit? I do not very well understand what you would be at; but if I can see any meaning at all in it, we hear enough about it from the minister on the seventh day, and I would prefer you should send home my children sharper and well informed in arithmetic, geography, and the like, to leading them into this abtruse matter. I have got on very well without it, and so can they. I like all sorts of improvement very well, but in this, I think, you go needlessly beyond the mark." Such is the sentiment which, in colloquial language like this, we shall not travel far without hearing. Neither shall we have occasion to travel far for the true solution. It is within us.

Before the soul, or human spirit, can be satisfied, can be made happy, it must know whereof itself is. The knowledge of earth, and plants, and animals, and arts, and trade, fills not the soul with satisfying supplies. With matter and material things there is no possibility of our failing to become acquainted; but even the harmonious relationships of these remain an inexplicable oracle without a spirit-intellection. There are these two sides to mental education, the side of Spirit, and the side of Nature. The former is internal to the soul, the latter external. Nature is not necessarily material, for there are the natural affections and feelings, the loves and hopes in man, which are not material; neither are they Spirit; they are natural. In order to the attainment of true and perfect humanity, in order to tend that way, it is needful that education should take the side of Spirit. Would the chymist know the secret in his experiment, he must study the law

or element in his solvent, and not seek it in the thing solved, or in the crucible which contains it. The mental crucible is the object of study; the solvent is the soul; the power in the solvent is the Spirit. No satisfactory solution of any material, or mental phenomena, can be attained without the conscious inpresence of Spirit. True, the Spirit is always present; the omnipresent is always omnipresent; and the teacher can make neither more nor less of that eternal fact. Such is the reply of the outward mind; on which it may be submitted, that it does make an immense difference. It makes all possible difference for human good or ill, for misery or happiness, whether the human soul is or is not, as continually, perpetually, and in all things as consciously sensible of the Spirit-presence, as in reality and in fact it is present. It is a sad mistake to determine that this vital fact can be overknown. Superabundantly spoken of, no doubt, it sometimes may be, but even that can hardly occur. For if the soul be not yet born into that inmost life, constant allusion by act, by bearing, by word, may surely be persevered in; and if the word, the idea, the fact be true to any auditor, no deterioration can occur by direct and frequent allusion. Familiarity with truth engenders no contempt. This course is no more than always takes place in every sphere in life. The language is echo to the being. The legislator in his hall, the merchant on the exchange, has his allusion to his supposed good, and, inferior as it is, no contempt or ridicule is by that means brought upon it. Artistic phraseology is strange to the trader's ears, because he lives not the artistic life, not because the phraseology is improper. Spirit language is strange to men, not on account of its irrelevancy to existence, but because they live a material life. It were better assuredly that men should be elevated to a higher life, than that language, and modes of treating the human soul, and aspirations for spirit-culture should descend to them!

In the ordinary interpretation of the term, we do not pretend to review these works. If we have in any degree opened in the reader's mind an idea of that spirit and system, which these books, like all others, can but faintly record, we have attained a satisfactory result. We are glad to find the sentiments, which the best men in all ages of

the world have held, confirmed in modern times by so pure a life, so intelligent an understanding, and so eloquent a speech as Mr. Alcott's. Instead of reproaching him for the introduction of doctrines too subtle for healthy appreciation by the young mind, the world might be reproached for so long withholding the rights of infancy from its neglected cravings.

The following beautiful passages are the best exposition we can offer of Mr. Alcott's intuition on the three grand points of Conversation, the Teacher, and Spirit-culture; the means, the actor, and the end.

"In conversation all the instincts and faculties of our being are touched. They find full and fair scope. It tempts forth all the powers. Man faces his fellow man. He holds a living intercourse. He feels the quickening life and light. The social affections are addressed; and these bring all the faculties in train. Speech comes unbidden. Nature lends her images. Imagination sends abroad her winged words. We see thought as it springs from the soul, and in the very process of growth and utterance. Reason plays under the mellow light of fancy. The Genius of the Soul is waked, and eloquence sits on her tuneful lip. Wisdom finds an organ worthy her serene utterances. Ideas stand in beauty and majesty before the soul.

"And Genius has ever sought this organ of utterance. It has given us full testimony in its favor. Socrates—a name that Christians can see coupled with that of their Divine Sage—descanted thus on the profound themes in which he delighted. The market-place; the workshop; the public streets; were his favorite haunts of instruction. And the divine Plato has added his testimony, also, in those enduring works, wherein he sought to embalm for posterity, both the wisdom of his master and the genius that was his own. Rich text-books these for the study of philosophic genius; next in finish and beauty to the specimens of Jesus as recorded by John.

"It is by such organs that Human Nature is to be unfolded into fulness. Yet for this, teachers must be men inspired with great and living Ideas. Such alone can pierce the customs and conventions that obscure the Soul's vision, and release her from the slavery of the corporeal life. And such are ever sent at the call of Humanity. Some God, instinct with the Idea that is to regenerate his age, appears in his time, as a flaming Herald, and sends abroad the Idea, which it is the mission of the age to organize in institutions, and quicken into manners. Such mould the Genius of the time. They revive in Humanity the lost Idea of its destiny, and reveal its fearful endowments. They vindi-

cate the divinity of man's nature, and foreshadow on the coming Time the conquests that await it. An Age pre-exists in them; and History is but the manifestation and issue of their Wisdom and Will. They are the Prophets of the Future.

"At this day, men need some revelation of Genius, to arouse them to a sense of their nature; for the Divine Idea of a Man seems to have died out of our consciousness. Encumbered by the gluts of the appetites, sunk in the corporeal senses, men know not the divine life that stirs within them, yet hidden and enchained. They do not revere their own being. And when the phenomenon of Genius appears, they marvel at its advent. Some Nature struggling with vicissitude tempts forth the Idea of Spirit from within, and unlooses the Promethean God to roam free over the earth. He possesses his Idea and brings it as a blessed gift to his race. With awe-struck visage, the tribes of semi-unfolded beings survey it from below, deeming it a partial or preternatural gift of the Divinity, into whose life and being they are forbidden, by a decree of the Eternal, from entering; whose laws they must obey, yet cannot apprehend. They dream not, that this phenomenon is but the complement of their common nature; and that in this admiration and obedience, which they proffer, is both the promise and the pledge of the same powers in themselves; that this is but their fellow-creature in the flesh. And the mystery remains sealed till it is seen, that this is but the unfolding of Being in its fulness; working free of every incumbrance, by possessing itself.

"For Genius is but the free and harmonious play of all the faculties of a human being. It is a Man possessing his Idea and working with it. It is the Whole Man—the central Will—working worthily, subordinating all else to itself; and reaching its end by the simplest and readiest means. It is Being rising superior to things and events, and transfiguring these into the Image of its own Spiritual Ideal. It is the Spirit working in its own way, through its own organs and instruments, and on its own materials. It is the Inspiration of all the faculties of a Man by a life conformed to his Idea. It is not indebted to others for its manifestation. It draws its life from within. It is self-subsistent. It feeds on Holiness; lives in the open vision of Truth; enrobes itself in the light of Beauty; and bathes its powers in the fount of Temperance. It aspires after the Perfect. It loves Freedom. It dwells in Unity. All men have it, yet it does not appear in all men. It is obscured by ignorance; quenched by evil; discipline does not reach it; nor opportunity cherish it. Yet there it is—an original, indestructible element of every spirit; and sooner or later, in this corporeal, or in the spiritual era—at some period of the Soul's development—it shall be tempted forth, and assert its claims in the life of the Spirit

(It is the province of education to wake it, and discipline it into the perfection which is its end, and for which it ever thirsts.) Yet Genius alone can wake it. Genius alone inspire it. It comes not at the incantation of mere talent. It respects itself. It is strange to all save its kind. It shrinks from vulgar gaze, and lives in its own world. None but the eye of Genius can discern it, and it obeys the call of none else.” * * * *

“To work worthily, man must aspire worthily. His theory of human attainment must be lofty. It must ever be lifting him above the low plain of custom and convention, in which the senses confine him, into the high mount of vision, and of renovating ideas. To a divine nature, the sun ever rises over the mountains of hope, and brings promises on its wings; nor does he linger around the dark and depressing valley of distrust and of fear. The magnificent bow of promise ever gilds his purpose, and he pursues his way steadily, and in faith to the end. For Faith is the soul of all improvement. It is the Will of an Idea. It is an Idea seeking to embody and reproduce itself. It is the All-Proceeding Word going forth, as in the beginning of things, to incarnate itself, and become flesh and blood to the senses. Without this faith an Idea works no good. It is this which animates and quickens it into life. And this must come from living men.

“And such Faith is the possession of all who apprehend Ideas. And Genius alone can inspire. To nurse the young spirit as it puts forth its pinions in the fair and hopeful morning of life, it must be placed under the kindly and sympathizing agency of Genius — heaven-inspired and hallowed — or there is no certainty that its aspirations will not die away in the routine of formal tuition, or spend themselves in the animal propensities that coexist with it. Teachers must be men of genius. They must be inspired. The Divine Idea of a Man must have been unfolded from their being, and be a living presence. Philosophers, and Sages, and Seers — the only real men — must come, as of old, to the holy vocation of unfolding humanity. Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato, and the Diviner Jesus, must be raised up to us, to breathe their wisdom and will into the genius of our era, to recast our institutions, remould our manners, and regenerate our men. Philosophy and Religion, descending from the regions of cloudy speculation, must thus become denizens of our common earth, known among us as friends, and uttering their saving truths through the mouths of our little ones. Thus shall our being be unfolded. Thus the Idea of a man be reinstated in our consciousness. And thus shall Man grow up, as the tree of the primeval woods, luxuriant, vigorous — armed at all points, to brave the winds and the storms

of the finite and the mutable—bearing his Fruit in due season.

“To fulfil its end, Instruction must be an Inspiration. The true Teacher must inspire in order to unfold. He must know that instruction is something more than mere impression on the understanding. He must feel it to be a kindling influence; that, in himself alone, is the quickening, informing energy; that the life and growth of his charge pre-exist in him. He is to hallow and refine as he tempts forth the soul. He is to inform the understanding; by chastening the appetites, allaying the passions, softening the affections, vivifying the imagination, illuminating the reason, giving pliancy and force to the will; for a true understanding is the issue of these powers, working freely and in harmony with the Genius of the soul, conformed to the law of Duty. He is to put all the springs of Being in motion. And to do this, he must be the personation and exemplar of what he would unfold in his charge. Wisdom, Truth, Holiness, must have pre-existence in him, or they will not appear in his pupils. These influence alone in the concrete. They must be made flesh and blood in him, to re-appear to the senses, and subordinate all to their own force; and this too, without violating any Law, spiritual, intellectual, corporeal—but in obedience to the highest Agency, co-working with God. Under the melting force of Genius, thus employed, Mind shall become fluid, and he shall mould it into Types of Heavenly Beauty. Its agency is that of mind leaping to meet mind; not of force acting on opposing force. The Soul is touched by the live coal of his lips. A kindling influence goes forth to inspire; making the mind think; the heart feel; the pulse throb with his own. He arouses every faculty. He awakens the Godlike. He images the fair and full features of a Man. And thus doth he drive at will the drowsy Brute, that the eternal hath yoked to the chariot of Life, to urge man across the Finite!

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“Our plans of influence, to be successful, must become more practical. We must be more faithful. We must deal less in abstractions; depend less on precepts and rules. We must fit the soul for duty by the practice of duty. We must watch and enforce. Like unsleeping Providence, we must accompany the young into the scenes of temptation and trial, and aid them in the needful hour. Duty must sally forth an attending Presence into the actual world, and organize to itself a living body. It must learn the art of uses. It must incorporate itself with Nature. To its sentiments we must give a Heart. Its Ideas we must arm with Hands. For it ever longs to become flesh and blood. The Son of God delights to take the Son of Man as a co-mate, and to bring flesh and blood even to the very gates of

the Spiritual Kingdom. It would make the word Flesh, that it shall be seen and handled and felt.

"The Culture, that is alone worthy of Man, and which unfolds his Being into the Image of its fulness, casts its agencies over all things. It uses Nature and Life as means for the Soul's growth and renewal. It never deserts its charge, but follows it into all the relations of Duty. At the table it seats itself, and fills the cup for the Soul; caters for it; decides when it has enough; and heeds not the clamor of appetite and desire. It lifts the body from the drowsy couch; opens the eyes upon the rising sun; tempts it forth to breathe the invigorating air; plunges it into the purifying bath; and thus whets all its functions for the duties of the coming day. And when toil and amusement have brought weariness over it, and the drowsed senses claim rest and renewal, it remands it to the restoring couch again, to feed it on dreams. Nor does it desert the Soul in seasons of labor, of amusement, of study. To the place of occupation it attends it, guides the corporeal members with skill and faithfulness; prompts the mind to diligence; the heart to gentleness and love; directs to the virtuous associate; the pure place of recreation; the innocent pastime. It protects the eye from the foul image; the vicious act; the ear from the vulgar or profane word; the hand from theft; the tongue from guile; —urges to cheerfulness and purity; to forbearance and meekness; to self-subjection and self-sacrifice; order and decorum; and points, amid all the relations of duty, to the Law of Temperance, of Genius, of Holiness, which God hath established in the depths of the Spirit, and guarded by the unsleeping sentinel of Conscience, from violation and defilement. It renews the Soul day by day." — *Spiritual Culture*, pp. 87–105.

The mind, which applies to these sentiments the noblest interpretation, will see through the New England idiom, which is occasionally perhaps rather egoistic to ears educated in an older routine; and recognise throughout the working of the same spirit which has animated the good in all ages.

Any one, who has attended a public meeting, and has afterwards read a printed report of it in the newspapers, will have experienced the insufficiency of any recital in imparting a semblance of the life and creative energy in the original. How then shall free, though orderly conversations be adequately reported? Conversations moreover with children full of animated thoughts, and upon the deepest subjects within their power. Yet some of these spirit-communings are so happy, and so happily recorded,

that we cannot forbear quoting one of them, that parents and teachers may see the entire possibility of applying these high principles of moral culture to actual practice.

CONVERSATION XXXIII.

SPIRITUAL WORSHIP.

PRAYER AND PRAISE.

Conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan Woman, from the Sacred Text, — Immortality. — Emblem of Holiness. — Idolatry. — Spiritual Worship. — Sincerity. — Idea of Prayer. — Actual Prayer. — Responsive Prayer. — Ritual of Worship. — Prayer of Faith. — Forgiveness. — Dramatic Prayer. — Devotion to the Holy. — Idea of Universal Adoration and Praise. — Reverence of the Godlike in Conscience. — Reverence of Humanity. — Reverence of the Invisible. — Admiration of Nature. — Spiritual Awe. — Supremacy of Spirit over Nature. — Worldliness. — Release from the Flesh. — Instinct of Adoration in Infancy. — Subject.

Mr. Alcott read the remainder of the

CONVERSATION OF JESUS WITH THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

JOHN iv. 16-30.

- Worship. 16. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband and come hither.
 17. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:
 18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband; in that saidst thou truly.
 19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.
 20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.
 21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.
 22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.
 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.
 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.
 25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.
 26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.
 27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?
 28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,
 29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?
 30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

(Before he had time to ask the usual question.)

Immortality SAMUEL T. (*spoke*) I was most interested in this verse: "He that drinks of this water shall thirst again, but he that drinks of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst." He means by this, that those who heard what he taught, and did it, should live always, should never die, their spirits should never die.

MR. ALCOTT. Can spirit die?

SAMUEL T. For a spirit to die is to leave off being good.

Emblem of
Holiness.

EDWARD J. I was interested in the words, "For the water I shall give him will be in him a well of water." I think it means, that when people are good and getting better, it is like water springing up always. They have more and more goodness.

SAMUEL R. Water is an emblem of Holiness.

MR. ALCOTT. Water means Spirit pure and unspoiled.

EDWARD J. It is holy spirit.

Idolatry.

ELLEN. I was most interested in these words, "Ye worship ye know not what." The Samaritans worshipped idols, and there was no meaning to that.

MR. ALCOTT. What do you mean by their worshipping idols?

ELLEN. They cared about things more than God.

MR. ALCOTT. What kind of false worship do you think Jesus was thinking about, when he said, "Woman, the hour is coming and now is, when neither in this mountain —"?

ELLEN. Oh! She thought the place of worship was more important than the worship itself.

MR. ALCOTT. Well! how did Jesus answer that thought?

ELLEN. He told her what she ought to worship, which was more important than where.

MR. ALCOTT. Some of you perhaps have made this mistake, and thought that we only worshipped God in churches and on Sundays. How is it — who has thought so?

(Several held up hands, smiling.)

Who knew that we could worship God any where?

(Others held up hands.)

Spiritual
Worship.

What other worship is there beside that in the Church?

EDWARD J. The worship in our hearts.

MR. ALCOTT. How is that carried on?

EDWARD J. By being good.

NATHAN. We worship God by growing better.

AUGUSTINE. We worship God when we repent of doing wrong.

Sincerity. JOSIAH. I was most interested in this verse, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." It means that to feel our prayers is more important than to say the words.

LEMUEL. And when we pray and pray sincerely.

MR. ALCOTT. What is praying sincerely?

LEMUEL. Praying the truth.

MR. ALCOTT. What is to be done in praying the truth? When you think of prayer, do you think of a position of the body — of words?

LEMUEL. (*Earnestly.*) I think of something else, but I cannot express it.

MR. ALCOTT. Josiah is holding up his hand; can he express it?

Idea of Prayer. JOSIAH (*burst out,*) To pray, Mr. Alcott, is to be good, really; you know it is better to be bad before people, and to be good to God alone, because then we are good for goodness' sake, and not to be seen, and not for people's sake. Well, so it is with prayer. There must be nothing outward about prayer; but we must have some words, sometimes; sometimes we need not. If we don't feel the prayer, it is worse than never to say a word of prayer. It is wrong not to pray, but it is more wrong to speak prayer and not pray. We had better do nothing about it, Mr. Alcott! we must say words in a prayer, and we must feel the words we say, and we must do what belongs to the words.

Actual Prayer. MR. ALCOTT. Oh! there must be doing, must there?

JOSIAH. Oh! yes, Mr. Alcott! doing is the most important part. We must ask God for help, and at the same time try to do the thing we are to be helped about. If a boy should be good all day, and have no temptation, it would not be very much; there would be no improvement; but if he had temptation, he could pray and feel the prayer, and try to overcome it, and would overcome it; and then there would be a real prayer and a real improvement. That would be something. Temptation is always necessary to a real prayer, I think. I don't believe there is ever any real prayer before there is a temptation; because we may think and feel and say our prayer; but there cannot be any doing, without there is something to be done.

MR. ALCOTT. Well, Josiah, that will do now. Shall some one else speak?

JOSIAH. Oh, Mr. Alcott, I have not half done.

Responsive Prayer. EDWARD J. Mr. Alcott, what is the use of responding in church?

MR. ALCOTT. Cannot you tell?

EDWARD J. No; I never knew

JOSIAH. Oh! Mr. Alcott!

MR. ALCOTT. Well, Josiah, do you know?

JOSIAH. Why, Edward! is it not just like a mother's telling her child the words? The child wants to pray; it don't know how to express its real thoughts, as we often say to Mr. Alcott here; and the mother says words, and the child repeats after her the words.

EDWARD J. Yes; but I don't see what good it does.

JOSIAH. What! if the mother says the words, and the child repeats them and feels them — really wants the things that are prayed for — can't you see that it does some good?

EDWARD J. It teaches the word-prayer — it is not the real prayer.

JOSIAH. Yet it must be the real prayer, and the real prayer must have some words.

Ritual of
Worship.

But, Mr. Alcott, I think it would be a great deal better, if, at church, every body prayed for themselves. I don't see why one person should pray for all the rest. Why could not the minister pray for himself, and the people pray for themselves; and why should not all communicate their thoughts? Why should only one speak? Why should not all be preachers? Every body could say something; at least, every body could say their own prayers, for they know what they want. Every person knows the temptations they have, and people are tempted to do different things. Mr. Alcott! I think Sunday ought to come oftener.

MR. ALCOTT. Our hearts can make all time Sunday.

JOSIAH. Why then nothing could be done! There must be week-days, I know — some week-days; I said, Sunday oftener.

MR. ALCOTT. But you wanted the prayers to be doing prayers.

Prayer of Faith. Now some of the rest may tell me, how you could pray doing prayers.

GEORGE K. Place is of no consequence. I think prayer is in our hearts. Christian prayed in the cave of Giant Despair. We can pray any where, because we can have faith any where.

MR. ALCOTT. Faith, then, is necessary?

GEORGE K. Yes; for it is faith that makes the prayer.

MR. ALCOTT. Suppose an instance of prayer in yourself.

GEORGE K. I can pray going to bed or getting up.

MR. ALCOTT. You are thinking of time, — place, — words.

GEORGE K. And feelings and thoughts.

MR. ALCOTT. And action?

GEORGE K. Yes; action comes after.

JOHN B. When we have been doing wrong and are sorry, we pray to God to take away the evil.

MR. ALCOTT. What evil, the punishment?

Forgiveness. JOHN B. No; we want the forgiveness.

MR. ALCOTT. What is forgive-ness, is it any thing given?

LEMUEL. Goodness, Holiness.

JOHN B. And the evil is taken away.

MR. ALCOTT. Is there any action in all this?

JOHN B. Why yes! there is thought and feeling.

MR. ALCOTT. But it takes the body also to act; what do the hands do?

JOHN B. There is no prayer in the hands!

MR. ALCOTT. You have taken something that belongs to another ; you pray to be forgiven ; you wish not to do so again ; you are sorry. Is there any thing to do ?

JOHN B. If you injure any body, and can repair it, you must, and you will, if you have prayed sincerely ; but that is not the prayer.

MR. ALCOTT. Would the prayer be complete without it ?

JOHN B. No.

ANDREW. Prayer is in the Spirit.

MR. ALCOTT. Does the Body help the Spirit ?

ANDREW. It don't help the prayer.

MR. ALCOTT. Don't the lips move ?

Dramatic Prayer.

ANDREW. But have the lips any thing to do with the prayer ?

MR. ALCOTT. Yes ; they may. The whole nature may act together ; the body pray ; and I want you to tell an instance of a prayer in which are thoughts, feelings, action ; which involves the whole nature, body and all. There may be prayer in the palms of our hands.

ANDREW. Why, if I had hurt any body, and was sorry and prayed to be forgiven, I suppose I should look round for some medicine and try to make it well.

(*Mr. Alcott here spoke of the connexion of the mind with the body, in order to make his meaning clearer.*)

SAMUEL R. If I had a bad habit and should ask God for help to break it ; and then should try so as really to break it — that would be a prayer.

CHARLES. Suppose I saw a poor beggar-boy hurt, or sick, and all bleeding ; and I had very nice clothes, and was afraid to soil them, or from any such cause should pass him by, and bye and bye I should look back and see another boy helping him, and should be really sorry and pray to be forgiven — that would be a real prayer ; but if I had done the kindness at the time of it, that would have been a deeper prayer.

AUGUSTINE. When any body has done wrong, and does not repent for a good while, but at last repents and prays to be forgiven, it may be too late to do any thing about it ; yet that might be a real prayer.

MR. ALCOTT. Imagine a real doing prayer in your life.

LUCIA. Suppose, as I was going home from school, some friend of mine should get angry with me, and throw a stone at me ; I could pray not to be tempted to do the same, to throw a stone at her, and would not.

MR. ALCOTT. And would the not doing any thing in that case be a prayer and an action ? Keeping your body still would be the body's part of it.

LUCIA. Yes.

ELLEN. I heard a woman say, once, that she could pray best

when she was at work; that when she was scouring floor she would ask God to cleanse her mind.

Devotion to the Holy. MR. ALCOTT. I will now vary my question. Is there any prayer in Patience?

ALL. A great deal.

MR. ALCOTT. In Impatience?

ALL. No; not any.

MR. ALCOTT. In Doubt?

GEORGE K. No; but in Faith.

MR. ALCOTT. In Laziness?

ALL (*but Josiah.*) No; no kind of prayer.

JOSIAH. I should think that Laziness was the prayer of the body, Mr. Alcott.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; it seems so. The body tries to be still more body; it tries to get down into the clay; it tries to sink; but the spirit is always trying to lift it up and make it do something.

EDWARD J. Lazy people sometimes have passions that make them act.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes; they act downwards.

Is there any prayer in disobedience?

ALL. No.

MR. ALCOTT. Is there any in submission?

In forbearing when injured?

In suffering for a good object?

In self-sacrifice?

ALL. (*Eagerly to each question.*) Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. (*Mr. Alcott here made some very interesting remarks on loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, &c., and the Idea of Devotion it expressed. Josiah wanted to speak constantly, but Mr. Alcott checked him, that the others might have opportunity, though the latter wished to yield to Josiah.*)

Idea of Universal Adoration and Praise. JOSIAH (*burst out,*) Mr. Alcott! you know Mrs. Barbauld says in her hymns, Every thing is prayer; every action is prayer; all nature prays; the bird prays in singing; the tree prays in growing; men pray; men can pray more; we feel; we have more — more than nature; we can know and do right; Conscience prays; all our powers pray; action prays. Once we said here, that there was a "Christ in the bottom of our Spirits" when we try to be good; then we pray in Christ; and that is the whole.*

MR. ALCOTT. Yes, Josiah, that is the whole. That is Universal Prayer — the adoration of the Universe to its Author!

* This improvisation is preserved in its words. Josiah, it may be named, was under seven years of age, and the other children were chiefly between the ages of six and twelve years.

Reverence of
the Godlike in
Conscience.

CHARLES. I was most interested in this verse—
“The day is coming, and now is, when men shall
worship the Father,” &c. I think that this means
that people are about to learn what to worship, and where.

MR. ALCOTT. Have you learned this to-day?

CHARLES. Yes; I have learnt some new things, I believe.

MR. ALCOTT. What are you to worship?

CHARLES. Goodness.

MR. ALCOTT. Where is it?

CHARLES. Within.

MR. ALCOTT. Within what?

CHARLES. Conscience, or God.

MR. ALCOTT. Are you to worship Conscience?

CHARLES. Yes.

MR. ALCOTT. Is it any where but in yourself?

CHARLES. Yes; it is in Nature.

MR. ALCOTT. Is it in other people?

CHARLES. Yes; there is more or less of it in other
Reverence of
Humanity. people, unless they have taken it out.

MR. ALCOTT. Can it be entirely taken out?

CHARLES. Goodness always lingers in Conscience.

MR. ALCOTT. Is Conscience any where but in Human
Nature?

CHARLES. It is in the Supernatural.

MR. ALCOTT. You said at first that there was
Reverence of
the Invisible. something in outward Nature, which we should wor-
ship.

CHARLES. No; I don't think we should worship any thing
but the Invisible.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the Invisible?

CHARLES. It is the Supernatural.

JOHN B. It is the Inward—the Spiritual.

But I don't see why we should not worship the sun a little as
well—

MR. ALCOTT. As well as the Sunmaker? But there
Admiration
of Nature. are sun-worshippers.

JOHN B. Yes; a little; for the sun gives us light
and heat.

MR. ALCOTT. What is the difference between your feeling
when you think of the sun, or the ocean, (*he described some
grand scenes,*) and when you think of Conscience acting in such
cases as—(*he gave some striking instances of moral power.*) Is
there not a difference?

(*They raised their hands.*)

What is the name of the feeling with which you look at
Nature?

SEVERAL. Admiration.

MR. ALCOTT. But when Conscience governs our weak body, is it not a Supernatural Force? Do you not feel the awe of the inferior before a superior nature? And is not that worship? The sun cannot produce it.

JOSIAH. Spirit worships Spirit. Clay worships Clay.

Supremacy of Spirit over Nature.

MR. ALCOTT. Wait a moment, Josiah. I wish to talk with the others; let me ask them this question;

— Do you feel that Conscience is stronger than the mountain, deeper and more powerful than the ocean? Can you say to yourself, I can remove this mountain?

JOSIAH (*burst out*,) Yes, Mr. Alcott! I do not mean that with my body I can lift up a mountain — with my hand; but I can feel; and I know that my Conscience is greater than the mountain, for it can feel and do; and the mountain cannot. There is the mountain, there! It was made and that is all. But my Conscience can grow. It is the same kind of Spirit as made the mountain be, in the first place. I do not know what it may be and do. The Body is a mountain, and the Spirit says, be moved, and it is moved into another place.

Worldliness.

MR. ALCOTT, we think too much about Clay. We should think of Spirit. I think we should love Spirit, not Clay. I should think a mother now would love her baby's Spirit; and suppose it should die, that is only the Spirit bursting away out of the Body. It is alive; it is perfectly happy; I really do not know why people mourn when their friends die. I should think it would be matter of rejoicing. For instance,

Release from Flesh.

now, if we should go out into the street and find a box, an old dusty box, and should put into it some very fine pearls, and bye and bye the box should grow old and break, why, we should not even think about the box; but if the pearls were safe, we should think of them and nothing else. So it is with the Soul and Body. I cannot see why people mourn for bodies.

MR. ALCOTT. Yes, Josiah; that is all true, and we are glad to hear it. Shall some one else now speak beside you?

JOSIAH. Oh, Mr. Alcott! then I will stay in the recess and talk.

Instinct of Adoration in Infancy.

MR. ALCOTT. When a little infant opens its eyes upon this world, and sees things out of itself, and has the feeling of admiration, is there in that feeling the beginning of worship?

JOSIAH. No, Mr. Alcott; a little baby does not worship. It opens its eyes on the outward world, and sees things, and perhaps wonders what they are; but it don't know any thing about them or itself. It don't know the uses of any thing; there is no worship in it.

MR. ALCOTT. But in this feeling of wonder and admiration which it has, is there not the beginning of worship that will at last find its object?

JOSIAH. No; there is not even the beginning of worship. It must have some temptation, I think, before it can know the thing to worship.

MR. ALCOTT. But is there not a feeling that comes up from within, to answer to the things that come to the eyes and ears?

JOSIAH. But feeling is not worship, Mr. Alcott.

MR. ALCOTT. Can there be worship without feeling?

JOSIAH. No; but there can be feeling without worship. For instance, if I prick my hand with a pin, I feel, to be sure, but I do not worship.

MR. ALCOTT. That is bodily feeling. But what I mean is, that the little infant finds its power to worship in the feeling which is first only admiration of what is without.

JOSIAH. No, no; I know what surprise is, and I know what admiration is; and perhaps the little creature feels that. But she does not know enough to know that she has Conscience, or that there is temptation. My little sister feels, and she knows some things; but she does not worship.*

MR. ALCOTT. Now I wish you all to think. What have
Subject. we been talking about to-day?

CHARLES. Spiritual Worship.

MR. ALCOTT. And what have we concluded it to be?

CHARLES. The Worship of Spirit in Conscience.

One of the most frequent objections raised against the principle of an interior development is, that the answers are not really those of the children, but of the teacher. And in proof of this, parents have adduced the fact, that they never could succeed in eliciting such expressions from their own children, as these printed conversations report. The latter is quite true; but it does not prove the former assumption. A truly spiritual mind is requisite to the justly putting a spiritual question; and this is not attained by imitation, nor by education wholly, but by genius chiefly, by generation, by the Spirit's presence. In the few leisure moments of a mercantile man, there can be none of that large and deep preparation which preceded these remarka-

* Here I was obliged to pause, as I was altogether fatigued with keeping my pen in long and uncommonly constant requisition. I was enabled to preserve the words better than usual, because Josiah had so much of the conversation, whose enunciation is slow, and whose fine choice of language and steadiness of mind, makes him easy to follow and remember. — *Recorder.*

ble results, of which we readily concede such a parent may rationally doubt. The anxieties of domestic life, whether rich or poor, also preclude the mother from coming into that serene and high relationship to her little ones, without which no approach to spirit-culture can be effected. Skepticism is unavoidable until the doubter is in a position to try the experiment, and such position is unattainable while he doubts.

But supposing it were a fact, that the responses are not spontaneous but mere echoes of the teacher's mind, it is not a small achievement to have discovered a mode of tuition which, while it is highly agreeable to the student, succeeds so well in making him acquainted with the deepest facts of all existence. Could it not, then, still more easily open to him the superficial facts, to attain which years and years of dull laborious college life are painfully occupied? If the laws in moral consciousness can there be presented to children; assuredly the reported facts in history and language should not be suffered to be any longer a grievous burden to our young men.

The Record we estimate as a very valuable book for teachers, and *therefore* find it difficult to make any extract which shall do justice to the work. Nor is it needful in this case, as the book is within the reach of all. The talented Recorder informs us that

"This book makes no high pretensions. It is an address to parents, who are often heard to express their want of such principles, and such a plan, as it is even in the author's power to afford. It will perhaps be more useful than if it were a more elaborate performance; for many will take up the record of an actual school, and endeavor to understand its principles and plans, who would shrink from undertaking to master a work, professing to exhaust a subject, which has its roots and its issues in eternity; as this great subject of education certainly has." — *Preface to Record of a School, 1st Edition.*

A transcript of one of the quarterly cards will, however, help to some idea of the comprehensive extent of the tuition, and it offers a field worthy the diligent study of all teachers.

QUARTER CARD OF DISCIPLINE AND STUDIES IN MR. ALCOOT'S SCHOOL FOR THE WINTER TERM CURRENT 1871.



THE TUITION AND DISCIPLINE ARE ADDRESSED IN DUE PROPORTION TO THE THREEFOLD NATURE OF MAN.		
THE SPIRITUAL FACULTY.	THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY.	THE RATIONAL FACULTY.
<p>MEANS OF ITS DIRECT CULTURE.</p> <p>Listening to Sacred Readings on Sunday Morning.</p> <p>Conversations on the GOSPELS.</p> <p>Keeping Journals.</p> <p>Self-Analysis and Self-Discipline.</p> <p>Conversations on Study and Behavior.</p> <p>Government of the School.</p>	<p>MEANS OF ITS DIRECT CULTURE.</p> <p>Spelling and Reading.</p> <p>Writing and Reciting Maps.</p> <p>Writing Journals, Epistles, and Pamphlets.</p> <p>Illustrating Words.</p> <p>Conversations and Amusements.</p>	<p>MEANS OF ITS DIRECT CULTURE.</p> <p>Defining Words.</p> <p>Spelling Speech.</p> <p>Self-Analysis and Self-Discipline.</p> <p>Demonstrations in Arithmetic.</p> <p>Reasonings on Conduct and Discipline.</p> <p>Review of Conduct and Study.</p>

The Subjects of Study and Means of Discipline are disposed through the Week in the following general Order.

TIME.	SUNDAY.	MONDAY.	TUESDAY.	WEDNESDAY.	THURSDAY.	FRIDAY.	SATURDAY.
IX	SACRED READINGS, with CONVERSATIONS on the TEXT, (BEFORE CHURCH)	WRITING JOURNALS and Studying Lessons.	WRITING JOURNALS and Studying Lessons.	WRITING JOURNALS and Studying Lessons.	WRITING JOURNALS and Studying Lessons.	WRITING JOURNALS and Studying Lessons.	PREPARING JOURNALS AND BOOKS For Examination.
X		SPELLING with ILLUSTRATIVE CONVERSATIONS on the MEANING AND USE of WORDS.	RECITATIONS in GEOGRAPHY, with CONVERSATIONS and ILLUSTRATIONS.	CONVERSATIONS on the GOSPELS as MEANS of Spiritual Growth.	ANALYZING SPEECH WRITTEN AND VOCAL CONVERSATIONS on the PRINCIPLES OF GRAMMAR.	RECITATIONS ARITHMETIC with DEMONSTRATIONS WRITTEN and MENTAL.	CONVERSATIONS STUDY BEHAVIOR as means of PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT.
XI		RECREATION ON THE COMMON OR IN THE ANTE ROOM.					
XII	READING and CONVERSATIONS	READING from CLASS-BOOKS.	WRITING PARAPHRASES.	CONVERSATIONS on NATURE.	WRITING EPISTLES.	READING from CLASS BOOKS.	REVIEW of Studies and Conduct.
III		INTERMISSION FOR REFRESHMENT AND RECREATION.					
IV	CONVERSATIONS at HOME.	STUDYING LATIN LESSONS with Recitations.	STUDYING FRENCH LESSON with Recitations.	RECREATIONS and DUTIES At Home.	STUDYING LATIN with Recitations.	STUDYING FRENCH with Recitations.	RECREATIONS and DUTIES At Home.

* * * CONVERSATIONS ON SPIRITUAL CULTURE ON Friday Evening of each week, at the School Room No. 7, in the Temple; commencing at 7 o'clock. Teachers of Classes in Sunday Schools, Parents, and others interested in Spiritual Culture, are respectfully invited to attend.

Children of both sexes, between the ages of four and fourteen, are admitted to the exercises of the School.

We cannot avoid the conclusion, that Boston withheld her patronage from Mr. Aleott by reason of her failure to inquire into the merits of the case, and not because she had duly and fully investigated and calmly judged. None but a willing eye can appreciate. A love-insight in the observer is needful in order to understand the labors and motives of a love-inspired man. Shakspeare is to be judged by the Shakspeare standard, not by Homer's works. Milton must be studied in the Miltonic idea. This æsthetic law applies to the criticism of actual works. Let spirit-culture be viewed from the spirit-ground, and then the spectator may freely speak. On that ground we affirm, Boston should not have permitted such a son to have wanted her home-protection and support for one moment. Should the opportunity again be afforded, we hope it will be even in a broader and deeper manner; when the idea being presented in great integrity will be better understood and more favorably received.

